

REMARKS

Claims 2, 3, 19 and 20 are pending in this application. No amendment has been made in this Response.

Claims 2, 3, 19 and 20 were rejected 35USC§102(b) as being anticipated by Akimoto et al.

The arm 35 and forks 36, 37 of Akimoto et al. move only along the transfer path 7, which is formed **on a lower level** than the upper surfaces of the carrier station 1 and processing section 10. See Fig. 1. The arm 35 and forks 36, 37 of Akimoto et al. is disclosed to move only on the lower level, that is, on the transfer path 7 and, therefore, cannot move **above** the carrier station 1 and processing section 10. Because they can move only on the transfer path 7, the arm 35 and forks 36, 37 do not correspond to the traveling body or the gripping means of the present invention. As stated in the Response filed on December 8, 2003, the last recitation of claim 20 makes the present invention distinct from Akimoto et al., because the traveling body of the present invention is moved above the product-housing section and the material-housing section on the workpiece-storage device. Rejection on claim 20 is unsupported by Akimoto et al. Reconsideration of the rejection is respectfully requested.

If the rejection by Akimoto et al. is maintained, please explain the reason of the rejection in more detail.

Application No. 09/400,833
Response dated April 15, 2004
Reply to Office Action of February 25, 2004

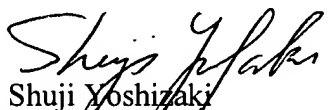
In view of the above, claims 2, 3, 19 and 20 are in condition for allowance. Applicant requests such action at an early date.

If the Examiner believes that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicant's undersigned agent at the telephone number indicated below to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case. The limited recognition of the agent is attached.

In the event that this paper is not timely filed, Applicant respectfully petitions for an appropriate extension of time. The fees for such an extension or any other fees that may be due with respect to this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-2866.

Respectfully submitted,

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Limited Recognition

Attachment: Limited Recognition

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Expires: July 8, 2004



Harry I. Moatz
Director of Enrollment and Discipline

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